

SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY SELF-DETERMINATION ACT
Virginia Resource Advisory Committee

Project Guidance
May 19, 2011

Project Types

Projects will:

- improve the maintenance of existing infrastructure,
- implement stewardship objectives that enhance forest ecosystems, and
- restore and improve land health and water quality.

At least 50 percent of all Title II nationally funds must be used for projects that are primarily dedicated to:

- road maintenance, decommissioning, or obliteration; or
- restoration of streams and watersheds.

Conservation Education. The portion of the conservation education activity that accomplishes work that is authorized in the Act may be funded under title II. For example, work on national forests or benefiting national forests by maintaining or improving ecosystem and/or watershed health; wildlife, fish and native plant habitat; or road, trail and infrastructure maintenance or obliteration. Conducting a conservation education program is not among the authorized uses of title II funds.

Conservation Easements. No.

Land Status

Projects may be:

- on Federal land, and
- on non-Federal land where projects would benefit the resources on Federal land.

Project Proponents

Project funds may be used to implement cooperative agreements with willing Federal agencies, State and local governments, private and nonprofit entities, and landowners.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

- Title II projects are subject to NEPA regardless if federal, state, county, private, or other land status. Act Sec 204 (d) makes all title II projects a federal action.
- NEPA can be done after project is awarded funds.
- Forest Service NEPA can simply cite a state environmental analysis.
- The RAC can recommend using title II funds to conduct NEPA. If RAC does not agree with using title II for required NEPA, the Forest Service approving officer can consider the project to be withdrawn [Act Sec 204 (b)].

Project Proposals

Project proposals include:

- The purpose of the project
- A description of how the project will meet the purposes of this title.
- The anticipated duration of the project.
- The anticipated cost of the project.
- The proposed source of funding for the project, whether project funds or other funds.
- Expected outcomes, including how the project will meet or exceed desired ecological conditions, maintenance objectives, or stewardship objectives.
- An estimate of the amount of any timber, forage, and other commodities and other economic activity, including jobs generated, if any, anticipated as part of the project.
- A detailed monitoring plan, including funding needs and sources, that:
 - tracks and identifies the positive or negative
 - impacts of the project, implementation, and
 - provides for validation monitoring; and
 - includes an assessment of the following:
 - Whether or not the project met or exceeded desired ecological conditions; created local employment or training opportunities, including summer youth jobs programs such as the Youth Conservation Corps where appropriate.
 - Whether the project improved the use of, or added value to, any products removed from land consistent with the purposes of this title.
 - Whether the project is to be in the public interest.

Recommendations and Approvals

The committee RECOMMENDS and the Forest Supervisor APPROVES on behalf of the Secretary. (The project does NOT go to the Regional Office or Washington Office for approval.)

Criteria for Forest Supervisor approving a project:

- The proposed project is recommended by the RAC, the majority of each group--A, B, C--agrees to recommend the project
- The proposed project is for a use authorized in the Act
- The proposed project meets all other applicable laws and regulations--NEPA, National Forest Management Act, Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, etc.
- The proposed project complies with the Forest Plan and other relevant plans.
- The proposed project can be implemented with appropriate legal and procedural methods--i.e., complies with FS acquisition management (contract, grant, agreement) policies and practices.
- The project will improve the maintenance of existing infrastructure, implement stewardship objectives that enhance forest ecosystems, and restore and improve land health and water quality.